WHITE DEER MEADOWS DEED OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

This management plan, dated as of [Month, Day, Year], is entered into by **Six Bears Holdings, LP**, owner of **WHITE DEER MEADOWS**, whose principal address is 15750 Rocky Mountain Road, Belgrade, MT 59714, (hereafter referred to as the "Landowner") and **MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**, whose address is 1420 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, Montana 59620-0701 (hereafter referred to as "FWP" or the "Department").

This Management Plan is being entered into pursuant to Section II.E. of that Certain Deed of Conservation Easement granted by the Landowner to the Department on [Month, Day, Year], and recorded as County Record [Number] on [Month, Day, Year], in the records of Gallatin County, Montana.

This Management Plan serves as a flexible link between Conservation Easement (CE) terms intended to endure in perpetuity and changeable conditions and situations on the land. It is a living document, to be reviewed periodically by FWP and the Landowner, and to be amended as needed upon agreement of both parties. Its function is to document strategies for land management in which FWP and the Landowner would be cooperating to ensure consistency with the terms and intent of the CE. The principal strategy is periodic meetings with the landowner and field monitoring of compliance with CE terms. Additionally, this Management Plan details strategies for managing croplands, native, riparian, and mountain foothill habitats, controlling noxious weeds, and allowing public recreational access as guaranteed in the CE document.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the FWP/White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement is to preserve and protect the conservation and agricultural values of the Land, particularly the habitat the Land provides for wildlife species, in perpetuity. The White Deer Meadows property includes approximately 404 acres along the Bridger Mountain foothills south of North Cottonwood Creek and north of Bill Smith Creek.

The Landowner offered the sale of the White Deer Meadows conservation easement to FWP. This offer reflects the Landowner's desire to promote conservation of the land, to prevent

subdivision, and to protect mule deer winter range along with other wildlife habitat values. Funding sources for this CE is Habitat Montana.

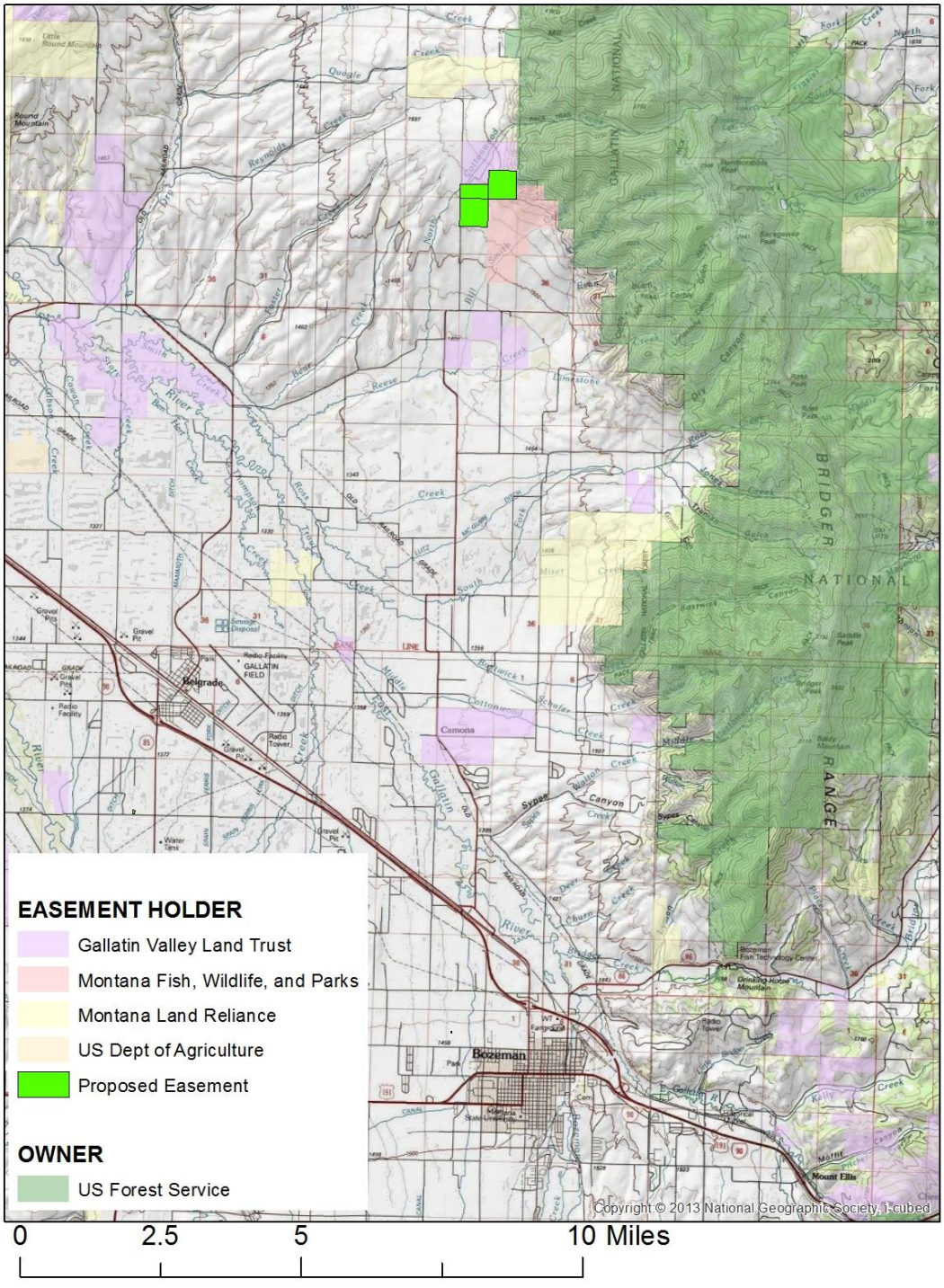

Figure 1: White Deer Meadows conservation easement project location

The property possesses a mosaic of deciduous shrubland, sagebrush steppe, coniferous forest, and montane grassland on a south-facing aspect that makes it high-value ungulate winter range. Approximately 30 acres of riparian vegetation include healthy aspen clones, willow, and mature cottonwoods. Approximately 160 acres of shrub-steppe include antelope bitterbrush, sagebrush, snowberry, chokecherry, serviceberry, and Rocky Mountain juniper. Approximately 180 acres of montane grasslands include native components (Idaho fescue, western wheatgrass, and prairie junegrass) and non-native components (smooth brome, orchard grass, Kentucky bluegrass, and mountain timothy), with increased non-native components aligned with approximately 160 acres (the agricultural use area) on the south end of the property. Approximately 30 acres of conifer-dominated forest mainly include Douglas fir and Rocky Mountain juniper.

Approximately 1,000 yards of North Cottonwood Creek flows through the property. There are 2 springs on-site, and 1 spring that flows into the property. The property has 2 historic ditches for irrigation of once-plowed hay pastures in the approximately 160-acre agricultural area where non-native species now dominate. Native grasses, desirable forbs and shrubs, and conifer communities dominate the approximately 160-acre hunting zone. An approximately 80-acre portion (Riparian Area) includes most of the riparian vegetation found on site (Figure 2).

The project site is in critical winter range for 200-400 mule deer in the Northwest Slope population, also known as Population Habitat Unit 1 (Pac et al. 1991). Mule deer winter range significantly overlaps with private land in the Bridger foothills, and development of this winter range is one of the highest threats to this population. The area is also in range of 3 mammal species of concern: wolverine, hoary bat, and little brown myotis (Montana Natural Heritage Program, accessed 2/12/2018). Other wildlife values include 100-150 elk, white-tailed deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, red fox, Merriam's turkey, ring-necked pheasant, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, northern goshawk, and prairie falcon (Cunningham personal observation, MFWP 1994).

The Landowner recently purchased this property from the family of its long-time owner, the Armstrong/Millage Ranch. The property will be managed for its aesthetic, intrinsic, wildlife, recreational, and agricultural values for the benefit of both current and future generations.

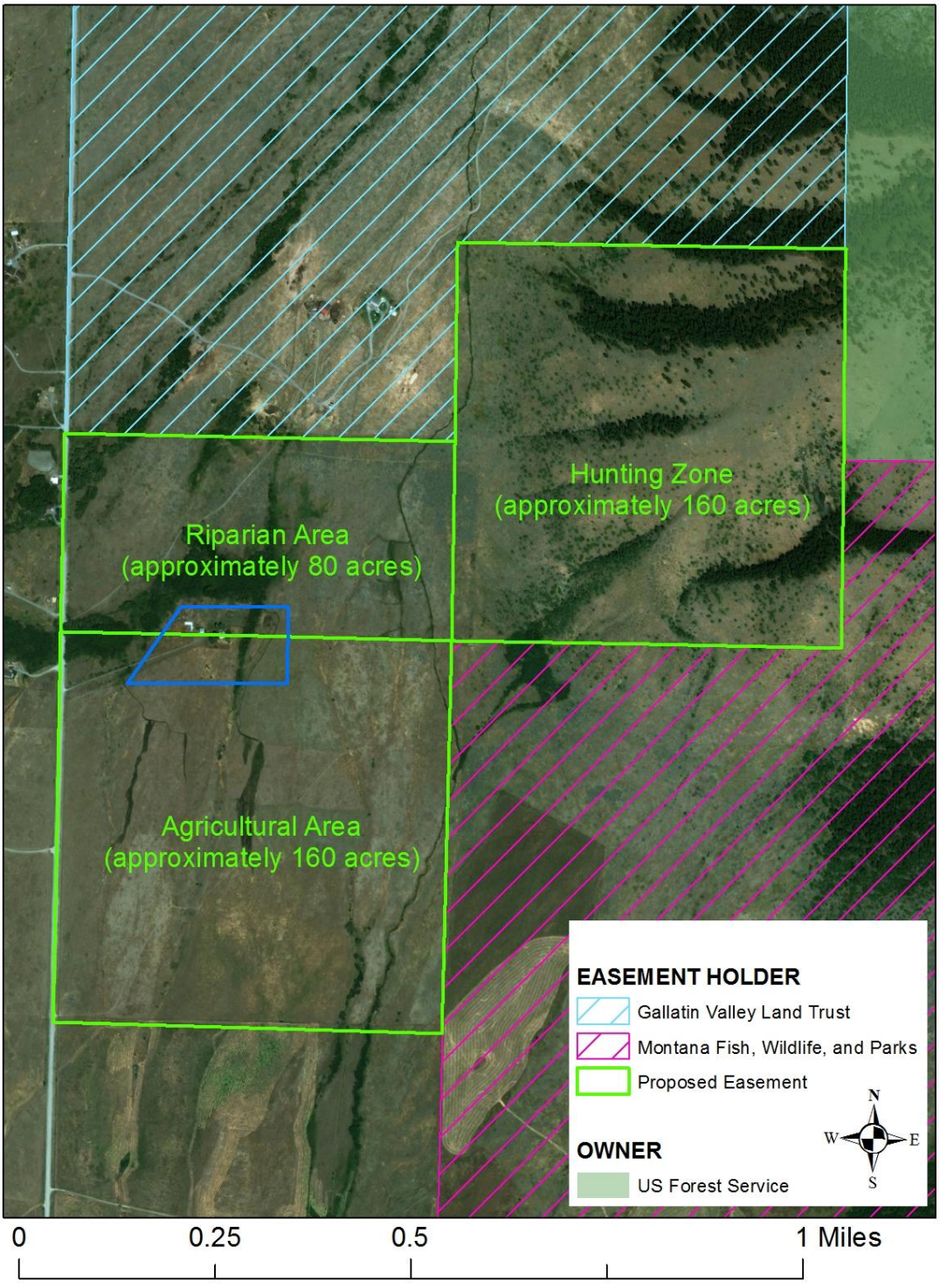

Figure 2: The White Deer Meadows property outlined in green showing approximate acreage for the three areas of management interest. The 10-acre building envelope is outlined in blue. Adjacent US Forest Service and neighboring conservation easements as shown.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: BY IMPLEMENTATION OF FWP EASEMENT TERMS, THE QUALITY AND AMOUNTS OF NATIVE HABITATS, IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL HABITATS, AND WILDLIFE USE FOUND ON WHITE DEER MEADOWS, SHALL BE MAINTAINED AND/OR IMPROVED WITHOUT DISPLACING PRIVATE LAND USE.

Objective 1: Maintain and/or enhance native grasslands, shrublands, conifers, and riparian vegetation for wildlife habitat through conservation easement protections.

Native Grasslands: Native grasslands occur along and within the riparian habitats of the riparian area and mountain foothills in the hunting zone. Removal or manipulation (such as sod-busting) of native grasslands is prohibited under the terms of the easement. Vegetation manipulation through the implementation of the grazing system will be allowed.

Shrublands and Conifers: Woody shrub and tree species are critically important to wildlife. The removal, control, or manipulation of shrub and tree species by any means is prohibited within the terms of the easement including but not limited to burning, plowing, chemical treatment, or removal of such tree and shrub species. These prohibitions do not apply to the routine clearing or control of brush in connection with the construction and maintenance of trails, roads, fences, and structures permitted under this easement. Through this management plan, and if both parties agree, conifer management projects may be designed to enhance ungulate winter range.

Riparian Vegetation: Removal or manipulation (farming, sod-busting) of riparian areas is prohibited within the terms of the easement.

Objective 2: Maintain and/or enhance existing native and wildlife-friendly plant communities, as well as agricultural habitats. If farming and grazing are desired, conservation practices to promote wildlife habitat enhancement will be employed particular to the portion of the property of the intended action.

Grazing management:
Domestic sheep and goats shall be prohibited on this property to prevent the spread of disease to native wildlife. Terms defined in the easement or this management plan do not require grazing, and grazing is currently not proposed, but this property is capable of sustaining livestock use under sound management practices. For the purposes of grazing management, there are three portions of the property to consider (Figure 2):

Building envelope: within the approximately 10-acre building envelope, up to 10 horses or other allowed domestic grazers may be kept, housed, and fed.

Agricultural Area: The approximately 160-acre agricultural area largely consists of non-native grasses and is mainly intended for cultivation. When/if this pasture becomes cropland, opportunities for grazing will be limited to post-harvest and will be at the owner's discretion. If this area is not used for tilled cropland or cultivation, grazing can be allowed as discussed in the non-native pasture section of Appendix A.

Riparian Area and Hunting Zone: These areas together (approximately 240 acres) will comprise one grazing pasture, which may be grazed in numbers, distribution, and at times of year as part of a rest-rotation grazing plan meeting or exceeding FWP minimum grazing standards (Appendix A). If the Landowner wishes to graze within these areas, grazing will be conducted in a manner that will minimize impact to woody riparian vegetation.

If grazing is desired by mutual agreement of the landowner and department, grazing will require adherence to a grazing management plan with a rest-rotation grazing system that meets or exceeds the FWP minimum grazing standards (Appendix A). A detailed grazing plan will be created at that time.

Upon mutual agreement between both parties, the hunting zone and riparian area may be grazed as one pasture. In a given year, these areas could receive one treatment: growing season grazing, post seed-ripe grazing, or full rest from grazing. If the intent is to use grazing in consecutive years, the scheduled rotation would be: 1) grazing allowed during growing season, 2) grazing allowed after seed-ripe, and then 3) a full year of rest from grazing. Grazing in the riparian area will be given additional considerations regarding frequency and duration of livestock grazing to minimize impacts to woody vegetation.

Maximum stocking rate is discussed in Appendix A and will not be further defined here.

Grazing plan adherence will be monitored annually by FWP to assess effectiveness and Landowner compliance. FWP retains the option for conducting vegetation monitoring to further assess vegetation trends and impacts from grazing. FWP, in conjunction with the Landowners, may recommend fence and water improvements, if deemed necessary.

<u>Farming:</u>
To perpetually define and ensure sound agricultural practices across time and Landowners, this easement requires sound farming practices to be implemented on existing cultivated ground and allows for future implementation of wildlife habitat enhancement projects.

Farming activity will be permitted on existing or historic farm/cultivated ground only (agricultural area, Figure 2). Sod busting or tilling of previously undisturbed ground, including uplands, riparian and wetland vegetation, is not permitted under the easement. When possible, landowners will maintain dry land harvested grain field stubble height at 10 inches or more for upland game bird habitat. Should grain fields be converted to hay production, haying will be prohibited until after July 15 to protect upland game bird nesting.

Infrastructure**:**

As per the conservation easement terms, the Landowner has the right to "construct, remove, maintain, repair, or replace fences, corrals, and other livestock handling structures" provided the structures do not significantly impact wildlife habitat or wildlife migration on and through the land. Land maintenance, including but not limited to fence and water development construction and repair, noxious weed control shall be the responsibility of the landowner. FWP agrees to make modest improvements to the access road and establish the parking area to a level the Department determines is sufficient to provide the planned level of public use. FWP will not provide maintenance of these improvements after their initial establishment.

All new fence construction must comply with FWP's Wildlife-Friendly Fencing guidelines, following MFWP 2012 or more recent edition if applicable.

Objective 3: Maintain wildlife use of the property.

The property provides year-round habitat for game and non-game species. The main goal of the easement centers on preserving intact winter range for mule deer by preventing subdivision and further fragmentation of the land. Mule deer winter range is mainly represented within the hunting zone but includes the property in its entirety. The local mule deer herd numbers 200-400. The area is also in range of 3 mammal species of concern: wolverine, hoary bat, and little brown myotis (Montana Natural Heritage Program, accessed 2/12/2018). Other wildlife values include 100-150 elk, white-tailed deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, red fox, Merriam's turkey, ring-necked pheasant, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, northern goshawk, and prairie falcon.

If game damage issues occur, they will be managed through hunting whenever possible during the general hunting season frameworks. Game damage hunts may be options should wildlife damage occur outside general hunting season dates. Game damage materials and/or assistance are provided on an as-needed basis by FWP to landowners who allow reasonable free public hunting.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE GUARANTEED PUBLIC HUNTING ACCESS OPPORTUNITY

Objective 1: Maintain managed public access for hunting use on deeded land and to adjoining public lands.

The easement guarantees reasonable public hunting access only to the hunting zone (and neighboring US Forest Service lands) during general hunting seasons. Hunting may occur elsewhere on the property at the landowner's discretion. As per FWP Conservation and Public Access Easement terms, the Landowner must allow reasonable nonmotorized public access for hunting big game and birds during all general fall hunting seasons (i.e., game bird, archery big game, and rifle big game hunting seasons). The Landowner may not charge fees, lease, or commercially outfit fishing, hunting, trapping, or charge trespass fees on deeded land or to adjoining public lands.

Public access will originate from Springhill/Rocky Mountain Road to the private access road north of the Landowner's building envelope (Figure 3). Hunters will be required to park at the designated parking area, and then will be able to access the hunting zone by foot. Hunting may occur according to regulations established by the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Landowner(s) may deny access to, or expel from the Land, any person for cause, including: intoxication or use of illegal substances, reckless behavior that jeopardizes human life, wildlife habitat, or Landowner's property, or is in violation of law or regulation applicable to public use of the Land; or misconduct under or violation of the terms of public access provided in this easement, including any plan of access adopted and implemented under this easement.

See Exhibit A for additional details

III. FWP / WHITE DEER MEADOWS PROPERTY BASELINE

To document existing wildlife habitat, infrastructure, and vegetative communities, these characteristics will be described, photographed, and mapped in an "Easement Baseline Inventory Report." The baseline report serves as a tool for monitoring, allowing identification of any significant changes to the property over time. Annual monitoring of the entire property will be conducted by FWP, preferably alongside the Landowner(s), to determine compliance with the easement terms and to assess Management Plan effectiveness. Monitoring results will be shared with the landowner.

The Landowner is encouraged to thoroughly familiarize themselves with easement terms, Management Plan and grazing system, and refer to the Deed of Conservation Easement and Management Plan documents or contact FWP with any questions or concerns to avoid non-compliance. Conservation easements are a partnership and regular communication between Landowner and FWP can be very beneficial for both parties.

IV. REFERENCES CITED

Pac, D. F., R. J. Mackie, and H. E. Jorgensen. 1991. Mule deer population organization, behavior, and dynamics in a northern Rocky Mountain environment. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Final Report project # W-120-R-7-18. 316 pp.

MFWP, 1994. Maher Ranch Conservation Easement. Environmental Assessment, Management Plan, and Socio-Economic Assessment.

MFWP, 2012. A Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences. Second Edition. 56pp. Helena, MT.

EXHIBIT A: WHITE DEER MEADOWS CONSERVATION EASEMENT ACCESS RULES

1) The approximately 160-acre hunting zone and adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands are open to public hunting each day of fall upland game bird and big game archery and rifle hunting seasons (dates set as by the Fish and Wildlife Commission – see hunting regulations). This property is located within FWP Deer/Elk Hunting District 312.

2) Any hunting access to the remainder of the property is at the landowners' discretion. Hunters should not expect to be allowed access to other areas of the property besides the designated hunting zone.

3) Hunting access is allowed via park-and-walk (non-motorized only) from the designated parking area along the ranch access road (see attached map).

4) Hunting access will be permitted by reservation only. Reservations may be obtained by calling [describe who/when, phone number]

5) When demand exists, up to 3 hunting parties per day will be allowed.

6) No camping or open fires are permitted on the property.

7) No hunting in the immediate vicinity of livestock (if present).

8) Come prepared to retrieve harvested game (i.e., backpacks, drag ropes, game cart, etc.) Horses will not be allowed.

Report violations to 1-800-TIP-MONT

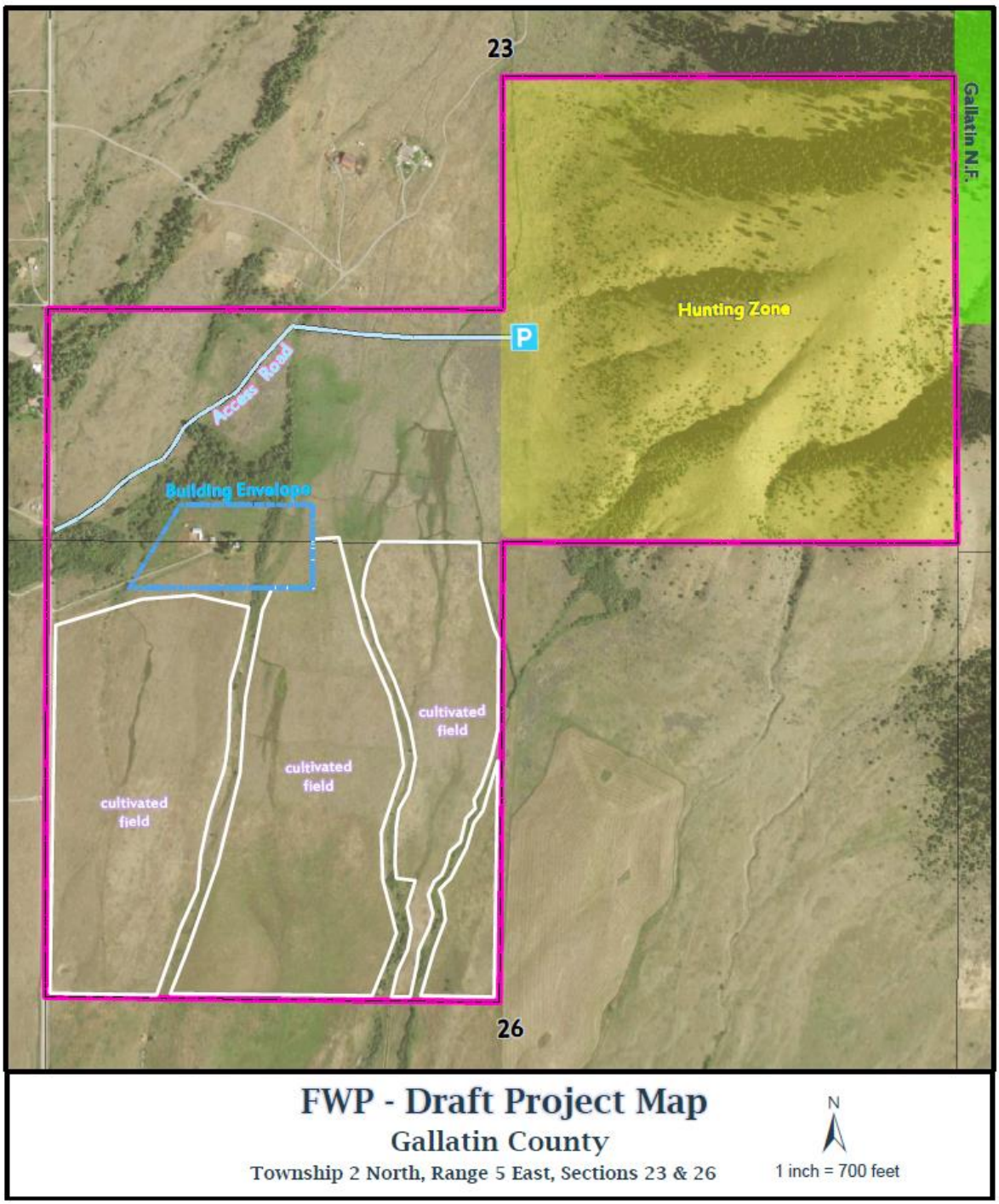

Figure 3: Exhibit A map of hunting zone, parking areas, and access road.

APPENDIX A: FWP MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR GRAZING LIVESTOCK

Version 1.2 (received 08/20/2018)

Introduction

The following grazing standards represent the minimum required by FWP of a landowner who reserves the right to pasture and graze livestock (private and public land). These standards apply to all FWP funded projects; at times it may be necessary to provide more rest from grazing than described as minimum to meet specific wildlife or fisheries habitat objectives. The minimum is most frequently applied (without additional adjustment for wildlife and fisheries needs) on projects like conservation easements and Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Projects where the property remains in private ownership and agricultural use remains the primary objective. On FWP-managed Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), wildlife production and habitat conservation are the primary objective and when livestock grazing occurs it is not unusual for the amount of rest from livestock grazing to exceed that required by the minimum standard. Also on WMAs, grazing intensity may be reduced to a level significantly lower than allowable by the minimum standard. These standards are designed to address management of both upland and riparian landforms.

Why a minimum standard?

Livestock grazing is the predominant land use in Montana. As the state's primary fish and wildlife management agency, FWP is actively involved with livestock grazing as it influences fish and wildlife habitats throughout Montana. About 2.4 million cattle are maintained in Montana. Livestock grazing occurs on about 69% of the state's land surface. Potential impacts to fish, wildlife and their habitats caused by grazing are well documented in the literature. Also, well documented, are potential benefits for conservation that can be derived for some wildlife species through carefully planned livestock grazing strategies. Conserving wildlife habitat while continuing livestock grazing typically requires management strategies that differ from those employed for the sole purpose of maintaining a sustainable livestock forage base that maximizes livestock production. One reason for the difference in management strategies is because vegetation is much more than a forage base for wildlife. Vegetation species composition, structure, and diversity are important aspects of cover essential to the survival and production of wildlife. Healthy riparian communities are critical not only for aquatic species but for proper channel and flood plain function. Seventy-five percent of all Montana wildlife species rely on riparian areas for all or a portion of their lives. This includes many species covered in the FWP’s Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Strategy. When livestock grazing occurs, it is not unusual for cover to be the population limiting factor for many species. Aldo Leopold referred to this concept of habitat quality as 'Quality of Landscape'. Addressing cover is especially important in implementation of FWPs Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Strategy. It is therefore possible that a livestock operator may be employing a grazing strategy that maintains a sustainable forage base on most of the property, but may not be providing adequate forage, cover, or floral diversity for important fish and wildlife species.

Sustainable livestock production often employs grazing strategies emphasizing production and maintenance of grass species while placing less emphasis on the maintenance of forbs and

woody plants. Many wildlife species require grazing strategies that emphasize healthy woody plants and availability of forbs and grass seed heads on at least portions of the landscape every year. The maintenance of robust woody vegetation and cover is also a very important component of healthy riparian systems. Healthy ecological systems are essential for a variety of aquatic and terrestrial riparian obligates.

The purpose of FWPs minimum grazing standards is to achieve a balance between maintaining sustainable agriculture and quality fish and wildlife habitat on working ranches and to provide flexibility to conserve and protect habitat needs on WMAs where wildlife habitat is the primary objective and agriculture is secondary. FWP has applied the standard successfully over the past 30 years on a variety of projects ranging from working cattle ranches to FWP WMAs. There are examples in Montana and other states where a grazing standard similar to FWPs is being applied by livestock operators independent of FWP.

Grazing Plan

Prior to grazing livestock, the Landowner and FWP must agree upon and implement a grazing plan. A grazing plan includes a map of the pastures, a grazing formula specific to those pastures, the class of livestock, and other information pertinent to the management of livestock. Format for the grazing plan is included as part of the management plan template for conservation easements. The grazing plan will be included as part of the Management Plan for easement projects, and will define the limits and extent to which grazing may occur. The Management Plan may be amended by mutual consent, as more particularly described in Paragraph II.E. of the Conservation Easement. For other projects, the management plan will be included as an attachment to the grazing lease or contract. On conservation easements, the grazing plan will be enforceable only on lands covered by the easement.

Upland Minimum Grazing Standard for Summer/Fall Systems

This standard applies to upland pastures in native plant communities (i.e. generally on soils that have never been plowed) and for all riparian pastures. The grazing plan must meet or exceed minimum levels of periodic rest from livestock grazing to allow native plants adequate opportunity to reproduce and replenish root reserves. The minimum amount of rest required for any pasture grazed in one year during the plant growing season is defined as rest throughout the following year's growing season (i.e. grazing deferred until seed-ripe), followed by one year of yearlong rest, as shown in Table 1. Each pasture receives only one grazing treatment per year, and the treatments are rotated annually as shown in Table 1. The growing season is defined as beginning with the period of rapid plant growth (generally early to mid-May) until seed-ripe for the latest maturing native grasses, such as bluebunch wheatgrass or western wheatgrass (generally early August). Because the exact dates can vary as much as a few weeks depending on the location in Montana, specific dates for livestock movement are developed for each project. Occasionally it may be necessary for the grazing system to allow for some livestock to be in the pasture scheduled for the A treatment (Table 1) beyond the growing season.

A three-pasture grazing system is used as an example (Table 1) to show how the landowner might typically rotate livestock through pastures to meet the minimum levels and required

sequence of rest from livestock grazing. In practice, the landowner is not limited to any particular number of pastures; many projects include more than three pastures. In some instances, sub-pastures are employed to meet riparian or other objectives on the land. If livestock are grazed, they must be moved through the pastures in compliance with these standards and the grazing plan. Where grazing occurs during the growing season, the three-treatments outlined in Table 1 are essential and the total number of pastures and/or sub-pastures will vary between projects.

Table 1. Livestock Grazing Formula using a three-pasture approach as an example.

Grazing Seasons	Pasture 1	Pasture 2	Pasture 3
Year One	A	B	C
Year Two	B	C	A
Year Three	C	A	B
When all treatments have been applied to all pastures, the grazing rotation begins again at year one.			
A = livestock grazing allowed during the growing season; B = livestock grazing begins after seed-ripe time; C = rest from livestock grazing yearlong.			

Winter and/or Early Spring Grazing

In some situations, an early grazing treatment (prior to mid- May) may be considered. However, it must be kept in mind that grazing capacity and forage production in the year a pasture is grazed from winter to beyond mid-May, will be temporarily reduced. On projects where early spring grazing (prior to rapid plant growth) is combined with summer (active growing season) grazing the three grazing treatments described in Table 1 must be employed.

It is usually more efficient to manage winter grazing separately from spring-summer grazing. If livestock are to be grazed in a native range or riparian pasture in winter or early spring (generally December through early May), and a separate grazing formula is required, it must be coordinated with the summer-fall grazing system as follows: Minimum required rest in pastures where livestock are grazed and/or fed hay during winter is one winter of rest in every two (2) years. Hay, grain, salt, protein or other supplements will not be placed in riparian areas during winter or any other season. Minimum required rest in pastures where livestock are grazed in spring, prior to early May, is one spring of rest in every two years. Any pastures grazed later in spring than early-mid May require the greater amount of rest shown in the table 1. As a minimum, when grazing is limited to winter or the non-growing season period, a two-pasture alternate use approach is frequently used. The area designated for winter grazing is divided into two pastures and each year one pasture is grazed during winter months and the other rested and use is alternated from year to year.

During winter months cattle tend to concentrate in wooded areas (shrub or tree-dominated areas) for shelter. This must be kept in perspective when assessing the impacts to woody vegetation. It is often the case that with careful placement of hay, cattle impacts to woody vegetation can be kept to a small portion of the area. If this is not the case, it might be necessary to fence a portion of the woody vegetation to protect it from damage, but should only be done once efforts to

control livestock distribution by other means have proven ineffective. An acceptable level of impact will vary depending on the objectives (i.e. a level of woody vegetation impact acceptable for a working cattle ranch may be much different than for a WMA).

Scope

The goal is to include as much of the lands under easement as possible within the grazing system, but one must be realistic in recognizing the unique needs of a livestock operation. For instance, it may be necessary to set aside small areas as animal husbandry units to be used at the landowner's discretion. Such areas might include calving pastures, branding pastures, sorting pens, bull pastures, holding corrals, or pastures used for weaning and shipping. Also, one or more pastures may be necessary for rounding up or transitioning livestock between summer/fall and winter seasons, which may require annual fall grazing. As long as the majority of the native rangelands involved are within a grazing system that meets the minimum standards for yearlong rest and season long deferment, this is acceptable.

Non-native Pasture

It is common for livestock operators to have pastures on their land that are non-native range. The landowner's goal is usually to keep these pastures productive as non-native pasture. The pastures typically are seeded with an exotic pasture grass or grass mix. On occasion forbs like dry-land alfalfa are included in the planting. The minimum standards for season long deferment and yearlong rest applied to native rangelands do not necessarily apply to non-native pastures. In cases of non-native pasture, a grazing strategy that is coordinated with the grazing system and meets the needs of the ranch should be worked out. In the case of crested wheatgrass pasture it may be necessary to allow grazing early (late-winter or early spring) each year to maintain palatability. In the case of other pasture grasses, such as smooth brome, a deferred approach works well; a pasture is grazed during the growing season in year one then deferred from grazing until near seed-ripe in year 2 (about the time such grasses would normally be harvested as hay). This will maintain the productivity of the non-native species until replanting is necessary and in some cases maintain them as attractive feeding sites for large wild ungulates. It is important to keep in mind that these areas, unlike native range, are essentially cropland and whether grazed or left idle will eventually need some sort of agricultural practice to maintain their productivity.

It is usually best to leave irrigated pasture management to the landowner's discretion. If important riparian is included in the field it might be necessary to fence the riparian zone from the irrigated pasture to protect it from livestock grazing. Usually grazing strategies employed on irrigated pasture are not consistent with proper management of key native riparian plants. In such situations, it may be necessary to apply the guideline *Series entitled: The Need for Stream Vegetated Buffers Parts 1 through 3*, Montana Department of Environmental Quality 2008.

Livestock operators often place cows in hayfields during winter months. In such cases the field should be managed at the landowner's discretion and in some instances, it might be necessary to fence out riparian from the hayfield to protect it from grazing.

Stocking Rate

Usually FWP does not require a maximum stocking rate as part of the grazing strategy on easements or Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Projects. In such cases it is clearly stated in the grazing plan, that the maximum stocking rate will be ultimately determined by the operator's ability to conform to the grazing system. In other words, the livestock numbers may increase as long as the plan can be followed, and livestock movement dates are not compromised. Such an approach is consistent with the reality that, for most easement projects, the primary use of the land is agricultural.

Occasionally a landowner has requested that an upper limit stocking rate be established as a stipulation in the easement. As long as the number of livestock is realistic this is not a problem.

On lands owned by FWP any grazing that occurs will be at stocking levels determined by the agency and approved by the FWP Commission.

Mineral and Other Supplements

On privately owned grazing lands the landowner is given more discretion on locations for placement of mineral block than on FWP lands. However, regardless of land ownership the placing of mineral block within riparian areas will be strongly discouraged. On FWP lands the placement of mineral block will be described as part of the grazing plan. Supplements will be placed away from riparian areas, ponds, and roads. Rocky (stable soil) areas on ridge tops or in the trees are preferred sites.

On FWP lands livestock within pasture grazing systems are not to be fed hay.

Flexibility

Rarely, a severe environmental influence (i.e. fire, drought, grasshoppers) may require a onetime deviation from the prescribed grazing plan. In such cases the landowner is to notify the local FWP representative of the problem. In a timely manner the local FWP representative, Habitat Section representative, and landowner will meet to discuss the issue and work out a solution. It is important to keep in mind that short term adjustments to the grazing plan must be the exception rather than the rule. Allowing grazing to occur in a pasture scheduled for rest is always a last resort. FWP has managed grazing systems across Montana through a variety of severe environmental events. This experience has shown that when a legitimate problem exists an alternative can usually be found that avoids grazing the pastures scheduled for rest.

Management Plan Approved By:

LANDOWNER
Six Bears Holdings, L.P., an Arizona Limited Partnership
By: Cub Management, Inc.
Its General Partner

By:

_____ _____
Michael D. Strasser, Its President Date

_____ _____
Howard Burt, FWP Region 3 Wildlife Manager Date

_____ _____
Mark Deleray, FWP Region 3 Supervisor Date

_____ _____
Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Division Administrator Date